



CHRIS FAULKNER/DAILY DEMOCRAT

Canda Rashid (right) prepares another iPad for Holy Trinity Catholic student Wendolyn Hannum, whose mother Rebecca may be hoping for a chance to use the new educational tool.

Apples for the students

HTC hands out iPads to students in grades 7-12.

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In the previous century, students gave apples to their teachers.

In the current century, the teachers are giving Apples to their students.

Junior high and high school students at Holy Trinity Catholic's Fort Madison building received their own iPad tablet computers Tuesday night. The HTC elementary school students in West Point received them last year.

High school principal Chuck Elbert — who came here from Davenport Assumption, which give laptops to all the students

— said it's been a process and not as simple as, let's buy a bunch of iPads.

"We have Promethean boards, interactive white boards," Elbert said. "Like every school, we

ramps to an Interstate. If there's only so many, heavy traffic can get backed up, and computers run verrrrrry slow.

"We spent last year building our infrastructure," said Elbert of increasing the bandwidth capacity and the access points.

Like other schools, HTC gets its bandwidth feed from the Iowa Communication Network (ICN). "We had to make sure if we asked for more bandwidth, they could provide it."

After talking with other schools and asking various companies to give bids, HTC chose Meriki (meer-OCK-ee). With nine additional access points, HTC now has 13.

As for the expense, Elbert said most all Area Education Agency schools are part of a consortium that buys bandwidth in bulk.

The school also purchased the Child Internet Protection

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Chuck Elbert

Principal, Holy Trinity Catholic High School

have a computer lab and some netbooks that could be rolled around from room to room."

But, "They weren't very powerful and it wasn't as available. It was too hard to plan on using the technology.

"We were wireless, but we only had four access points," he said. He compared it to on

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HTC: Officials say iPads are a tool, allowing the educators to use 'flip the classroom' model

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Association filter, also common among schools that give out computers.

"We talked about, 'What do we want to block, and how do we want to block it,'" Elbert said. "The beauty of our access points is, as soon as I bring my device in, it will say 'Chuck's iPad,' and we'll be able to see where Chuck is at."

BUT ARE THEY NECESSARY?

If a 50-something told a 30-year-old about his "cool" CD player, he would get a yawn. That's what they grew up with, so what's the big deal?

But the 30-something parent might be wondering why their child should be getting such "advanced"

technology.

Elbert said he heard one person say, "It's not 'technology' if it was created before you were born."

"It's an opportunity," Elbert said. "We're preparing our kids for their future not our past."

The iPads aren't meant to replace human educators.

"It's a tool, but it's not the only tool," Elbert said. "We've had great teachers educating kids before iPads came, and we still have great teachers. iPads will allow more complex communication. It allows for more self-directed learning."

If one or more students is finished with their work, they can get on selected sites on the Internet to learn more advanced material.

Yes, there's an ugly side to the World Wide Web, but Elbert said it's no different than one student using a math book to learn and another hitting a

fellow student over the head with it. The iPad isn't bad in itself, but it can be used in unacceptable ways, and so "here are the consequences for an individual. We're not punishing the whole for the actions of a few."

Elbert also said this can be thought of as "flipping the classroom." The current model is to teach a lesson at 9 a.m. and then have the students go home and solve the problems discussed.

The new wave is: "If I can videotape my lessons, I want you to watch that lesson at home at 7 (p.m.). When you come back to school, I will help you on increasing the learning."

"We're just scratching the surface on what we need to do," Elbert said. "We'll continue to provide training for teachers. Tech won't take over the classroom. Nothing will replace the teacher in front of the classroom."

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